SAFETY POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The North Sioux City Community Library is committed to providing a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for patrons, staff, volunteers, and visitors. This policy establishes procedures to reduce risk, respond appropriately to emergencies, and protect individuals and library property.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

In an effort to ensure the safety of the library's patrons and staff, safety procedures will be activated in the event of an emergency as deemed necessary by library officials.

Safety procedures may be activated due to, but are not limited to:

- Inclement or severe weather
- Fire, smoke, or utility failure
- Medical emergencies
- Threatening, disruptive, or violent behavior
- Suspicious activity or unattended items
- Natural disasters
- Technology or infrastructure failures
- Situations involving actual or potential physical danger to staff or library users
- Circumstances that may cause damage to library property

The library reserves the right to modify operations, restrict access, or close the facility when safety concerns warrant such action.

III. AUTHORITY AND DECISION-MAKING

The authority to initiate or activate safety procedures rests with:

- The Library Director
- Designated supervisory staff
- Staff members working alone, when immediate action is required

In emergency situations, staff are authorized to contact emergency services (911) without prior approval.

When necessary, library staff may:

- Evacuate the building
- Secure the facility (lockdown or shelter-in-place)
- Close the library early or delay opening
- Restrict access to specific areas
- Request assistance from law enforcement, fire, or medical personnel
- Take any action necessary for the safety of library patrons, materials or facilities

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IV. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Library staff are expected to:

- Remain calm and professional during emergencies
- Follow established safety procedures and training
- Prioritize personal safety and the safety of patrons
- Immediately report unsafe conditions, incidents, or suspicious behavior
- Cooperate fully with emergency responders and city officials

Staff members should not attempt to physically intervene in dangerous situations unless necessary for immediate self-defense.

V. PATRON SAFETY EXPECTATIONS

Patrons are expected to comply with:

- Library safety instructions
- Emergency evacuation or shelter-in-place directions
- Requests from library staff or emergency personnel

Failure to follow safety instructions may result in removal from the building or suspension of library privileges.

VI. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

The library maintains written emergency procedures, which may include:

- Fire and evacuation procedures
- Severe weather shelter locations
- Medical emergency response guidelines
- Active threat or lockdown procedures
- Utility failure and building safety response

Emergency instructions will be clearly communicated through:

- Staff direction
- Public announcements
- Posted signage
- City emergency alerts when applicable

VII. INCLEMENT WEATHER AND NATURAL DISASTERS

During severe weather events, including tornado warnings, blizzards, or flooding:

- Patrons and staff may be directed to designated shelter areas
- Library operations may be suspended or modified
- The Library Director or designee may close the library in coordination with city officials

Weather-related closures or delays will be communicated through the library's website, social media, and city communication channels when possible.

VIII. BUILDING SECURITY AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

The library utilizes appropriate safety measures which may include:

- Security cameras
- Emergency lighting
- Fire alarms and extinguishers
- First-aid supplies
- Panic or emergency communication systems

Tampering with safety equipment is prohibited.

IX. INCIDENT REPORTING

All accidents, injuries, safety concerns, or unusual incidents must be documented using an internal incident report form and submitted to the Library Director as soon as possible.

Documentation supports:

- Follow-up actions
- Insurance reporting
- Risk management
- Ongoing safety improvements

X. TRAINING AND REVIEW

- Staff will receive safety training appropriate to their roles, including procedures for working alone.
- Emergency procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed.
- This policy shall be reviewed periodically by library administration and the Library Board.

XI. POLICY LIMITATIONS

No safety policy can eliminate all risks. The library cannot guarantee absolute safety but is committed to maintaining reasonable precautions and responding promptly and appropriately to emergencies.